haps, the question refers to Human Development Report of UNDP for 1993, which has a section on India as a part of liberation studies discussed in chapter 3 of the Report. As per their views, economic reforms initiated in 1991-92 are still in early stages and it is too early to assess its impact. However, there are some early indications. On the positive side, capital has started to return to India. There are signs of improved industrial efficiency as liberalisation has encouraged foreign investment, permitted the import of higher levels of technology and wide range of foreign goods often of better quality than local goods. On the negatice side, the reforms destabilised financial markets, led to stagnation of industrial output and forced some companies out of business. The Report further states that the rural poor, more than a third of India's population are paying a price for the reforms but not yet seeing many of the benefits. Report concludes that although the reforms are proceeding along the right lines, there is need to cushion the adverse impact on the poor by improving the efficiency and coverage of social programmes.

(c) to (f) The surest and most durable route to poverty alleviation lies in rapid, broad-based and sustained growth of output and employment. Fundamentally, our reform programmes are being formulated to achieve this goal. Policies are under constant review so that there is no undue burden on the people. The Government have also brought out a Discussion paper on "Economic Reforms—Two Years after and the Task ahead". The paper inter-alia gives the rationale of economic reforms undertaken until now, broad results achieved and reforms agenda for the next three years.

The most important benefit of the reforms has been the success in bringing down the rate of inflation from nearly 17% in August 1991 to 5.5% as on July 17, 1993. It is well known that inflation hurts everybody particularly the poor. Therefore, control on inflation has been of a vital benefit to the poor.

The Public Distribution System (PDS) has been strengthened and expanded to 1700 specially identified backward blocks

Budget for 1993-94 has removed excise duties on tea and coffees and reduced excise duties on other mass consumption items such as vanaspati, soaps, matches, footwears and dry battery cells.

The Government have also augmented budgetary provision for special employment and poverty alleviation programmes. The budget for 1993-94 increased the plan outlay for rural development by 62 per cent and allocation for Jawahar Rojgar Yojna by 60 per cent for creating additional 1100 million mandays of employment. Outlay for health has been stepped up by 60 per cent, that for elementary education by 55 per cent and that for agriculture and allied activities by 30 per cent. Further, for social safety net, a National Renewal Fund has been set up to fund schemes for compensation and redeployment of workers affected by restructuring. For the year 1993-94, budget provision of Rs. 700 crores has been made for NRF.

Financing Help to SSIs from SFCs

1927. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the empty coffers of the State Financial Corporations (SFCs) have stalled the growth of small scale industries (SSIs) in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that of nearly 9,000 SSI units slated to have gone into production with financial aid from the SFCs by May-end, barely 260 have gone on stream, mainly because the concerned SFCs have not been releasing the loan instalments as per schedule; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to protect the survival of such units; the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The financial assistance disbursed by SFCs during 1992-93 aggregated Rs. 1700 crore as compared to Rs. 1500 crore during 1991-92 thereby showing a growth of 13%.

SIDBI has also granted refinance limits aggregating Rs. 239 crore for providing assistance to the SSI sector during April-July, 1993. Besides, SFCs have also been allowed to raise SLR Bonds of Rs. 205 crore in the first tranche during August 1993 to meet their requirements.

(c) and (d) SIDBI has reported that the release of term loans sanctioned to small scale industries and other industrial projects is, inter-alia, linked to the promoters bringing in their anticipated contribution towards the project cost as also the progress in the implementation of projects. SFCs do not normally withhold disbursement of loan to such industries.

Refund of Excess Import Duty to Desu

1928. SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import duty of 30 per cent was levied on the power projects in the years 1991-92 and 1992-93;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Customs Department has charged the import duty varying from 175 per cent to 227 per cent on 220 K.V.X.L.P.E. cable purchased by DESU from M/s. Mitsui, Japan during the same period, though the said cable was certified as a power project by the Central Electricity Authority of India;

(c) whether it is also a fact that DESU has been representing, for refund of its money charged in excess; and

(d) if so, by when the excess duty charged from DESU will be refunded?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The rate of duty applicable to goods for power projects falling under heading 98.01 of the Customs Tariff during the years 1991-92 and 1992-93 are as follows: (1)—upto 28-2-92 :

(i) Projects of Capacity 50 MW and below	40 per cent advalorem
(ii) Projects of Capacity above 50 MW	30 per cent advalorem
(2) From 1-3-1992 to 27-2-1993	30 per cent advalorem
(3) From 28-2-1993	20 per cent advalorem

(b) M/s. DESU had applied for registration of the contract for the import of 220 K.V.X.L.P.E. cable under Project Import Regulations, 1986 for assessment of the goods at rates applicable to power project. Since the Customs Authorities were of the view that the goods imported by M/s. DESU were not entitled for assessment as power project, the goods were assessed on merits under the respective headings of the Customs Tariff at varying higher rates of duty. An adjudication order was passed by the concerned Assistant Collector of Customs to this effect. An appeal against the said order by M/s. DESU has been rejected by the Collector of Customs (Appeal). M/s. DESU have since filed an appeal before Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. M/s. DESU have represented for refund of duties levied in excess of project rate. Regarding refund of duties, it will depend on the outcome of the appeal before Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Tribunal.

Commissioners of Income Tax

1929. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present total number of Commissioners of Income Tax; and

(b) what is the exact strength of the Commissioners of Income Tax belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes out of the above total number?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASEKHAR MURTHY) (a) Two Hundred and Ninety Seven

(b) Twenty Eight

Head Office of Allahabad Bank

1930. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the head office of Allahabad Bank was in Allahabad when the Bank was set up, but later on it was shifted to Calcutta;